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# *The President's Daily Brief*

*24 August 1970*

27

~~*Top Secret*~~

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# THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 August 1970

## PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The situation in Cambodia remains relatively quiet, but ARVN troops still cause trouble. *(Page 1)*

With aircraft grounded by bad weather, the Communists are pushing government forces away from Ban Na. *(Page 2)*

The way may be open for third parties to deal directly with the Tupamaros. *(Page 3)*


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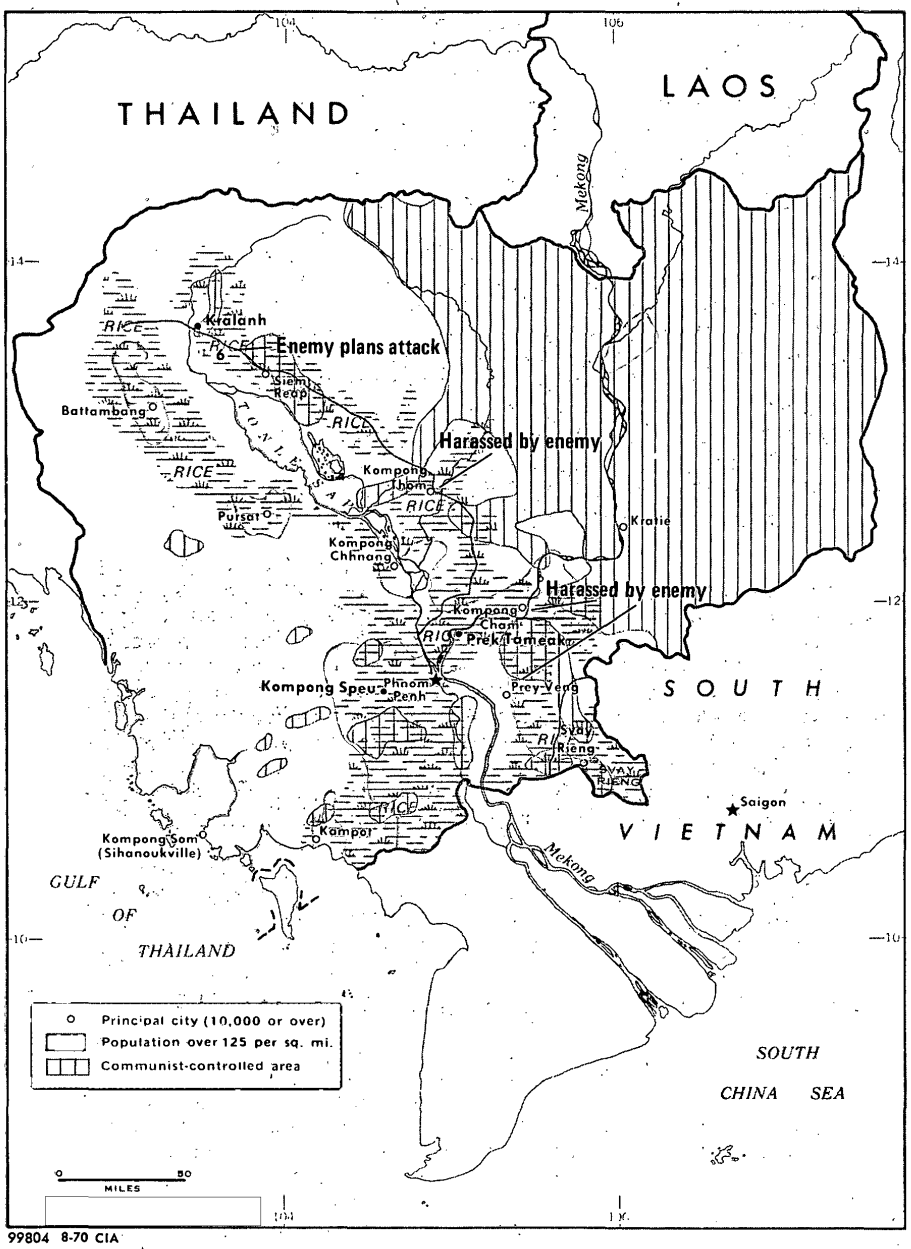
## CAMBODIA: Current Situation

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# CAMBODIA

No major fighting was reported over the weekend, but the Communists continued to harass the provincial capital cities of Kompong Thom, Kompong Cham, and Prey Veng. No Communist action was directed against Kompong Speu, where a buildup in the nearby countryside was reported by Cambodian commanders last week. The town of Kralanh, where fighting was heavy two weeks ago, will again be attacked, according to intercepted messages. The Communists plan to cut Route 6, thus isolating the town.

* * *

The government is reacting strongly to the alleged misconduct of South Vietnamese troops in Cambodia. Three Cambodians, including two officers, were killed on 21 August when South Vietnamese troops ambushed a small Cambodian convoy in Svay Rieng Province.

Prime Minister Lon Nol sent two high-ranking officials to brief the US chargé about the incident. Stealing and smuggling occur daily, the chargé was told, and the South Vietnamese are contemptuous of Cambodian authority. The Cambodian officials stated that Lon Nol is "increasingly fed up" and is even considering sending an armored battalion into the area to "control ARVN." Although the Cambodians apparently did not request any US action, the briefing is evidence of the seriousness with which Lon Nol views the situation.

*The continuing misbehavior of South Vietnamese troops is almost certainly becoming an important political liability for Lon Nol, who is held partly responsible for their presence in Cambodia. Even sophisticated Cambodian officials have been appalled by the contrast between the behavior of ARVN and the Vietnamese Communists, who with few exceptions have tried to ingratiate themselves with Cambodian villagers.*

*For its part, Saigon has taken steps to impose stricter discipline on its forces, who recently have been behaving better than in the early days of the Cambodian operation. The Cambodians are inclined to believe the worst of their allies, however, thus many of the stories reaching Phnom Penh probably are exaggerated in the telling.*




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## LAOS

The government offensive southwest of the Plaine des Jarres has run into stiff enemy opposition. Taking advantage of poor flying weather, elements of the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment have mounted a series of sharp counterattacks against government forces attempting to recapture the base at Ban Na. Additional guerrillas are now pushing into the Ban Na area from the south in an attempt to relieve the pressure.

On the political front, there has been no progress in efforts to get talks under way at Khang Khay. [redacted] the Pathet Lao are upset over the inclusion of prominent rightists in the government's delegation to Khang Khay, arguing that it violates an understanding with Prime Minister Souvanna that only neutralists and Communists would participate in the next round of talks. 50X1




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## URUGUAY

In an interview in a progovernment newspaper last Friday, Foreign Minister Peirano said that the administration maintained its adamant refusal to deal with the Tupamaros. If a third party were to undertake negotiations within Uruguay's juridical framework, however, the Uruguayan Government could not legally interfere. As a precedent, Peirano cited the case of a prominent Uruguayan banker ransomed by friends last year. The foreign minister mentioned Brazil as a third party that might negotiate with the terrorists. 50X1

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